

QUEENSLAND TREASURY

The age distribution of crime by offence type in Queensland

Crime research report

Queensland Government Statistician's Office

Queensland Treasury

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Report summary

Background

Age-crime curves plot the age-specific rates of offending and have been used to establish changes in the age distribution of crime both nationally and internationally. Previous work undertaken by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) (QGSO 2021a) aligns with other research findings and showed a decline in offender rates among younger people and increases in offender rates among people in their 30s and 40s when comparing 2008–09 with 2017–18. These changes in the age-crime curve were apparent for male and female offenders, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous offenders. QGSO's prior research also indicated that the average number of times offenders had contact with police increased over time for both younger and older offenders.

The project described in this report aimed to better understand the differential changes evident in Queensland-based age-crime curves by investigating if decreases in offending among younger people and increases among older people were related to the types of offences being committed. The project also involved examining if changing patterns of recidivism differed by age as found elsewhere (Howard and Corben 2018).

Research approach

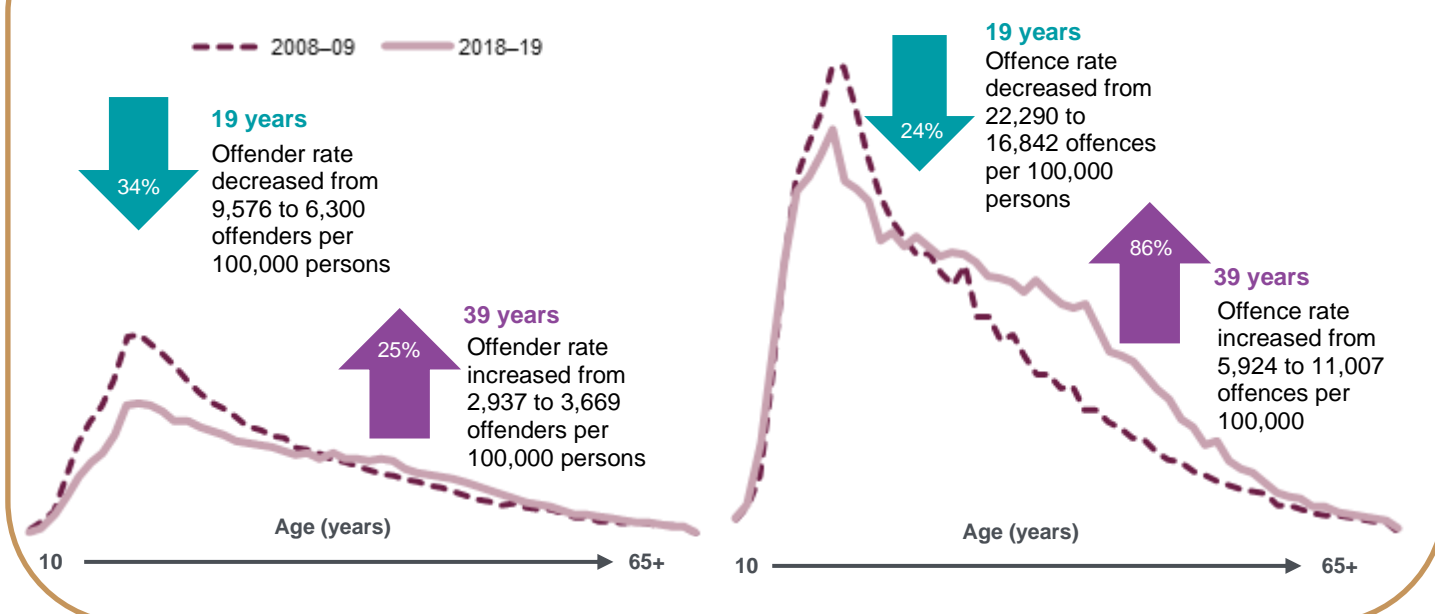
Age-crime curves for 2008–09 and 2018–19 were constructed to update previous QGSO findings and examine changes in the age-specific rates of offending and offences using police administrative data in relation to personal, property and 'other' offences. These established that changes were mostly attributable to those aged 14–49 years, and that offending patterns for younger and older offenders were different. From this, changes in the types and frequency of offenders and offences for those aged 14–29 years (younger offenders) and 30–49 years (older offenders) were compared in more detail. Changes in the frequency of prior offending were also explored by comparing the four-year retrospective offence counts of offenders.

The specific research questions addressed by the project were:

1. How has the age distribution of offending changed over time?
2. Is the change in the age distribution of offenders related to changes in types of offences being committed and the frequency of offending?
3. Is the change in the age distribution of offenders related to changes in prior offending?

Key findings

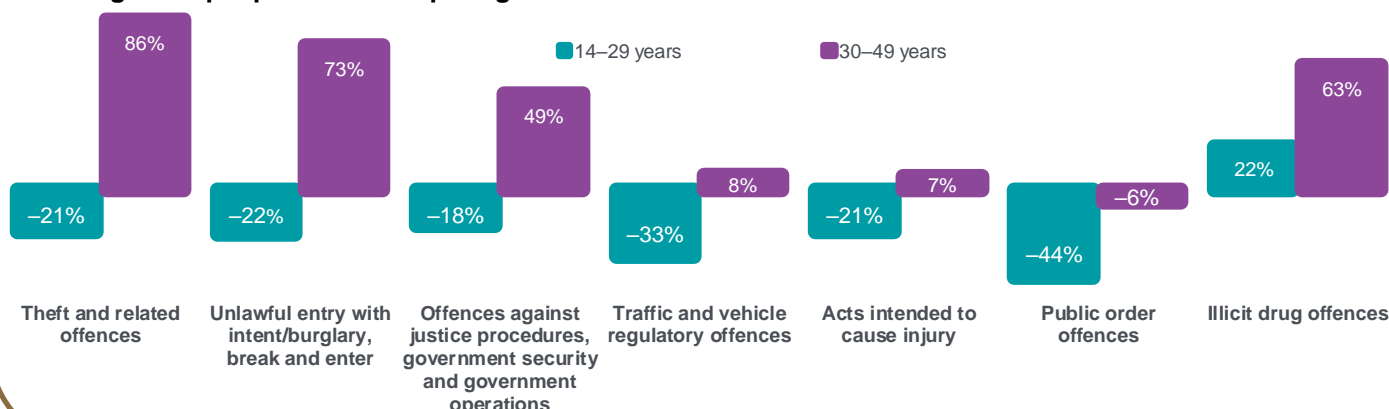
There has been a change in the age distribution of offenders, with a decrease in offender and offence rates among younger people and an increase among older people when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19.



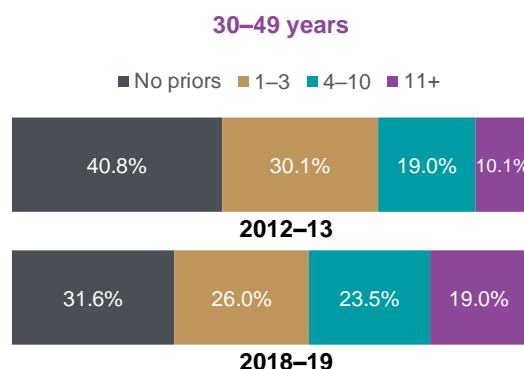
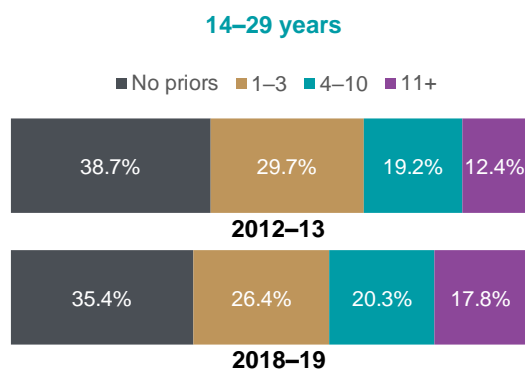
The average number of offences per offender increased for both younger and older offenders when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19.



There were substantial decreases in offender rates for *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* and *public order offences* among younger people, and substantial increases in *theft and related offences*, *unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter*, *illicit drug offences*, and *offences against justice procedures* among older people when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19.



The prevalence of no prior offending within the previous four years has become less prevalent among both younger and older offenders.



Conclusion

This project has shown that changes in the age-distribution of crime vary across different types of crime, which has implications for the development of targeted criminal justice interventions. In particular, the research showed increases in the prevalence of offenders among older people; and unlike younger offenders, older offenders were characterised by rising theft and illicit drug offending. The results also indicate more frequent and persistent offending by both younger and older offenders. These results highlight the relevance of interventions designed to address factors possibly contributing to people's entrenched involvement in crime.

1.0 Introduction

The Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) has previously reported changes in the age distribution of crime occurring in Queensland when comparing 2008–09 with 2017–18. This finding is consistent with research undertaken in other national and international jurisdictions which similarly found decreases in the prevalence of younger offenders and increases in the prevalence of older offenders. *The age distribution of crime by offence type: Comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19* research project (the project) described in this report explored this issue further by examining if changes in the age distribution of crime relate to the types and frequency of offending by people of different ages. In particular, it contributes to the literature by addressing a research gap regarding changing offence patterns occurring among older offenders.

The report commences with the provision of background information to contextualise the research within existing literature. The methods used to address key research questions are then described, followed by the presentation and discussion of research findings.

This report forms part of a suite of reports that focus on changes in crime, offenders and victims of crime in Queensland.¹ Information presented in this report may vary from data published elsewhere by QGSO and others, due to the use of different counting rules and data extraction dates. Readers are therefore urged to exercise caution when making comparisons between publications.

¹ Other QGSO reports related to this research project include *Changing patterns in the age distribution of crime in Queensland* (QGSO 2021a), *Spatial and temporal distribution of reported offences in Queensland* (QGSO 2021b), and *Victimisation from personal crime in Queensland, 2008–09 to 2018–19* (QGSO 2021c).

2.0 Background

This chapter briefly describes prior research findings related to the age distribution of crime to contextualise the project and its findings.

2.1. Changes in the age–crime curve

The relationship between age and crime is one of the most robust and consistently observed findings in criminological research. This relationship is often demonstrated through the 'age–crime curve', which plots offending at different ages. The classic age–crime curve shows the proportion of people who offend at specific ages and demonstrates that offending behaviour increases in adolescence, peaks in the teenage years and then declines from the late teens or early 20s (Farrington 1986; Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Sampson and Laub 2005; Steffensmeier et al. 1989).

Research conducted in Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US) has found that the age–crime curve has changed over time, with large reductions in youth offending and some increases in adult offending observed in recent decades (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; Kim, Bushway and Tsao 2016; Matthews and Minton 2018; Payne, Brown and Broadhurst 2018). This has resulted in a more flattened version of the classic age–crime curve, with less of a peak in offending in adolescence and a slower drop-off in offending during adulthood. The changes in age-specific rates of offending have coincided with the 'crime drop' observed in many Western countries in the last 25 years (Farrell, Tilley and Tseloni 2014) and it is often concluded that the crime drop observed in the 1990s in the UK and US, and in the 2000s in Australia, was largely driven by a drop in youth crime (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; Matthews and Minton 2018; Weatherburn, Freeman and Holmes 2014).²

2.2. Decreasing youth offenders

Most research attention regarding changes in the age–crime curve has focussed on reductions in youth offenders. Some studies have suggested that interventions have successfully diverted young people away from the criminal justice system (Payne, Brown and Broadhurst 2018), while others have referred to reduced opportunities for involvement in traditional types of offending and/or the potential displacement of youth offenders to online forms of offending which are more difficult to detect (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; McAra and McVie 2017). Regardless of the reason behind the youth crime drop, it has become evident that fewer people are coming into contact with the criminal justice system during their youth, resulting in a smaller, although more complex group of young offenders who are more likely to be chronic, recidivist offenders (McCarthy 2019). The reduction in youth offenders has been found across many offence types, being particularly apparent for acquisitive offence types such as burglary, car theft, and shoplifting (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; Matthews and Minton 2018).

2.3. Increasing adult offenders

Limited research attention has been given to exploring observed increases in older offenders, and mixed findings have emerged from available studies regarding the ages at which adult offending increased, and the types of offences associated with these increases. For example, Matthews and Minton (2018) reported little change in property offences and some small increases in violent crimes for adult offenders in their mid-20s to 40s in Scotland, with the most notable increases in 'other' offence types (such as illicit drug offences) for this age group. Farrell, Laycock and Tilley (2015) found increases in both property and violent offences for adult offenders in their 40s and 50s in the US, whilst Trimboli (2019) found increases in break and enter for those aged 35 years and over and increases in motor vehicle theft for those aged 25 years and over in New South Wales (NSW). Stavrou (2017) analysed the offending patterns of those aged 50 years and over in NSW, and found increases in offending across all offence types.

The mixed findings are likely to reflect jurisdictional and methodological variation between studies, and although research has established that observed increases in older offenders is not explained by an ageing population in general (Weatherburn, Halstead and Ramsey 2016), little is known about the causes of the ageing offender population. Some have suggested a cohort effect with youths growing up in the 'high offending' decades of the 1970s and 1980s being more likely to commit crime and then persist with a criminal career into their adulthood compared with prior or subsequent generations (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015).

² Queensland has also experienced a crime drop. For example, rates of reported property offences consistently declined between 2000–01 and 2009–10 (a 47.6% decline) and consistent decreases in offences against the person occurred between 2001–02 and 2014–15 (decreasing by 13.4% when comparing 1999–2000 with 2018–19 (QGSO 2020a)).

2.4. Queensland context

Changes in the age distribution of crime have also been observed in Queensland. Research progressed by QGSO (2021a) has shown that there has been a decline in offender rates among younger people and an increase in rates of offending among people in their 30s and 40s when comparing 2008–09 with 2017–18. These changes in the age–crime curve were apparent for male and female offenders, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous offenders. The research also indicated that the offending behaviour of those coming into contact with police had changed over time, with increases in the average number of police contacts for offenders.

2.5. Research objectives

No publicly available Queensland-based research has investigated if changes in the age distribution of crime differs by offence type or prior offending history. The research described in this report therefore undertook to update and expand on previous QGSO work by addressing the following research questions:

- How has the age distribution of offending in Queensland changed over time?
- Is the change in the age distribution of offenders in Queensland related to changes in types of offences being committed and the frequency of offending?
- Is the change in the age distribution of offenders in Queensland related to changes in prior offending?

Examination of prior offending history was undertaken to determine if any observed changes relate to patterns of recidivism as found elsewhere (Howard and Corben 2018). Indeed, understanding the possible drivers underpinning observed increases in the rate of older offenders represents a key focus of the current research given the limited research currently available regarding this issue.

3.0 Research approach

This chapter outlines the research methods used to address the project's key research questions. It describes the data used, counting rules applied, and how concepts were defined and measured by the project. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of research findings.

3.1. Data

The data used to address the project's research questions were obtained from the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The characteristics and use of these data are described in more detail below.

3.1.1. Offence-based information

Administrative data from QPS form the basis of the quantitative analyses performed for the project. These data were derived from information recorded in Queensland Police Records and Information Management Exchange (QPRIME). Specifically, data were selected for offences where an alleged offender had action taken against them by police (e.g. arrest, notice to appear, warrant, caution, restorative justice conference or other action) and where the offence was recorded as occurring between 2008–09 and 2018–19.³ Offences that had been actioned were used because they provide demographic information about the offender required to examine age-specific rates of offending.

3.1.2. Population estimates

Estimated resident population (ERP) figures were used to convert offender and offence counts into rates (per 100,000 persons) so that direct comparisons across time and age could be made. ERP figures from the ABS (2021) were obtained by single-year-of-age for this purpose.⁴

3.2. Measures and counting rules

3.2.1. Offender and offence counts

Examination of offending profiles involved analysis of offenders and offences. The way in which offenders and offences were counted by the project is outlined below, while information on how offences were categorised is available in Appendix A.

- **Offender counts** represent unique counts of offenders, such that an offender was counted once only during a financial year irrespective of how many times they were recorded as committing an offence during that year. This count therefore provides a measure of how many unique people were recorded as committing offences during a reference year.
- **Offender by offence type counts** were based on offenders in relation to the types of offences committed. In this measure, an offender was counted once for each different offence type perpetrated during a financial year, irrespective of how many times they were recorded as committing that type of offence. This count provides a measure of how many people were recorded as committing different types of offences in a reference year.⁵
- **Offence counts** represent counts of all criminal acts recorded against offenders and thus provides a measure of how many offences were recorded as being committed by offenders in a reference year.⁶

Counts of offenders and offences are based on the date an offence occurred, rather than the date an offence was reported to/detected by police, or the date an offender had police action taken against them, and this approach may be

³ The 2019–20 financial year was excluded from analysis due to substantial changes in Queensland's crime trends associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (QGSO 2021d).

⁴ ERP figures used to calculate rates are periodically updated and so rates provided in this report may differ slightly to rates reported elsewhere.

⁵ Various offence groupings were used for the analyses shown in this report which impacts how many times an offender was counted. For example, if an offender committed five fraud offences and two theft offences in a financial year, the offender would be counted once as a 'property offender' under the broad offence groupings of 'personal', 'property' and 'other' offences (see Appendix A Offence groupings for offence categories). However, if the offence types being examined were based on the 16 Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC) categories (ABS 2011), the offender would be counted once as a 'theft offender' and once as a 'fraud offender'.

⁶ Where an offender had multiple offences of the same or different offence type occurring on the same day, all were counted. Where multiple offenders were associated with the same offence, the offence would be counted for each offender involved. This means that the count of offences does not necessarily represent a count of unique offences, but a count of criminal acts committed by offenders.

different from that used by other research projects. Using the offence date minimises the impact of a) changes in reporting behaviour for some offence types (e.g. increased reporting of historical sexual offences committed by adult offenders) and b) police operations (e.g. a large number of drug or theft offences committed by an offender at different points in time are all actioned on the same day) on research results.

3.2.2. Age–crime curves and age-specific rates

The classic age–crime curve is constructed by plotting the age–specific offending rates for a population of interest for a given year (Farrington 1986; Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983). For this project, age–crime curves were based on age-specific rates of offenders and offences.⁷ Age–crime curves were calculated for offenders and offences overall and by offence type (personal, property and 'other').

Age–specific offender rates provide a measure of offender prevalence within the Queensland population for a specific year, whilst age–specific offence rates provide a measure of offending frequency within the population. Calculating age–specific offender and offence rates by offence type provides more detail regarding the prevalence and frequency of different types of offending within the population.

To calculate age-specific rates, offender and offence counts within an age category were divided by the ERP for that group of people in Queensland for a specific year, with the resulting number multiplied by 100,000.⁸ The age–crime curves presented in this report use single year of age from 10 to 64 inclusive, plus an aggregated category of all offenders aged 65 years and older.⁹ Aggregated age groups (10–13 years, 14–29 years, 30–49 years and 50 years and over) were also used to measure change over time in age-specific rates of offending.¹⁰

3.2.3. Average number of offences

The average number of offences per offender was calculated for each aggregated age group, overall and by offence type, and compared 2008–09 with 2018–19.¹¹ This provides a measure to compare the frequency of offending between groups of offenders.

3.2.4. Prior offending

Examination of offending profiles also involved investigating if changes in prior offending history were apparent among offenders over time. These analyses were undertaken to provide an indication of entrenched offending behaviour.

To determine if prior offending levels among offenders changed over time, a four–year retrospective offending period for each offender in 2012–13 and 2018–19 was examined and compared. The 2012–13 financial year was chosen as the earlier point of comparison as initial analysis of age–crime curves revealed that 2012–13 was the last year where the rates for offenders aged in their 30s and 40s did not substantially increase above 2008–09 rates. As the QPS offences data contain offences committed from 2008–09 onwards, only a four–year retrospective monitoring period was able to be consistently examined for each offender in the reference years.¹²

⁷ Age–specific rates can be calculated for a range of different offending measures (including arrest rates or crime rates), from different sources of data (including recorded or self–reported crime data) and can demonstrate different dimensions of offending (such as prevalence or frequency) (Blumstein and Cohen 1987; Brame and Piquero 2003; Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; Steffensmeier et al. 1989; Stolzenberg and D'Alessio 2008).

⁸ ERPs for specific years is the average for the relevant financial year. For example, the 2018–19 ERP is the average of 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2019. This is also known as the mid-point ERP relating to the financial year.

⁹ Offender age is calculated at the time the reference offence occurred, where the reference offence within any given financial year was the last offence recorded for the offender in that year.

¹⁰ These age groups were selected following exploratory analyses which showed that overall increases in offending among 'older' people tended to occur among those in their 30s and 40s, while decreases tended to occur among those aged under 30 years. The younger age groups of 10–13 years and 14–29 years were used to provide consistent age group comparisons throughout the findings since those aged 10–13 years were excluded from the prior offending analyses (see section 3.2.4 below).

¹¹ The distributions associated with the number of offences recorded per offender (by year and offence type) were heavily skewed, with a large proportion of offenders recorded as committing one offence. The mean (i.e. average) was therefore considered the best measure of central tendency for discussion and comparison, as use of the median or mode tended to equal one or two.

¹² Other research has shown that if people do reoffend this is likely to occur within a few years of their first offence. For example, while 45% of people convicted of an offence in New South Wales were reconvicted within four years, this increased to 56% when the monitoring period was extended to ten years (Agnew-Pauley and Holmes 2015).



Using the number of recorded offences in the four years prior to the reference offence (i.e. the last offence recorded for an offender in the reference year), the proportion of offenders in the following categories was calculated for each aggregated age group:

- no prior recorded offences
- 1–3 prior recorded offences
- 4–10 prior recorded offences
- 11 or more prior recorded offences.

The age group comprising offenders aged 10–13 years was excluded from this analysis. Under Queensland law, children under ten years of age are not held criminally responsible, and thus offenders in the 10–13 years age group would not have four full years of prior offending available in the data to determine their recorded offending history.

3.3. Limitations

Key research limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of findings are:

- The data used for analyses relate to offences recorded by police and do not provide a true measure of all offending within Queensland. This is because not all offending is reported to, or detected by police, and not all recorded offences are lodged with or proven in a court of law. Offence trends may reflect changes in the criminal justice system and community reporting of offences.
- The project examined cross-sectional snapshots of crime recorded in 2008–09 and 2018–19, with direct comparisons made between these two periods of time. A limitation of this approach is that offenders were examined at the aggregate level, rather than at the individual level. While the project's research findings provide insight into changing offender trends, person-based longitudinal analysis is better placed to understand changes in criminal career trajectories (see for example, Payne, Brown and Broadhurst 2018).
- Due to data constraints, the research uses a four-year monitoring period to examine prior offending, which provides a partial snapshot of a person's offending history. The research approach was also unable to account for life events that impact on offending that may have occurred during the four-year monitoring period, such as incarceration.

4.0 Findings

This chapter describes the project's research findings. Information on total Queensland offender and offence counts and rates for 2008–09 and 2018–19 is presented, followed by analyses relating to changes in the age distribution of offending when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. These changes are then explored further regarding the types and frequency of offending committed by offenders of different ages. Finally, changes in the four-year prior offending history of offenders of different age groups are discussed.

For this report, offence groups relate to summary offence groupings of 'property', 'personal' and 'other'; Appendix A describes the ANZSOC offence categories occurring within these offence groups, and ANZSOC offence categories generally contain more than one type of offence.

4.1. Total offenders and offences

Information on the total number and rate of offenders and offences in Queensland is provided in this section as context for the age-specific and offence-based analyses presented subsequently.

Table 1 shows the percentage change for the total number and rate of offenders and offences when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. Changes in the average number of offences committed per offender are also shown. Overall, reductions in the number and rate of offenders did not coincide with a reduction in the number and rate of offences recorded.

The number of offenders decreased by 2.2% from 114,524 to 112,055 when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. This decrease occurred despite an 18.8% growth in the population aged 10 years and over in Queensland over this time. Population growth meant that the offender rate per 100,000 persons decreased by 17.7% when comparing the offender rate of 2008–09 (3,094 per 100,000 persons) with 2018–19 (2,548 per 100,000 persons).

While there was a reduction in the prevalence of offenders, those who offended did so at a greater frequency. When comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, the number of offences increased by 28.2%, resulting in a 7.9% increase in the offence rate from 6,831 to 7,371 offences per 100,000 persons. The growth in the number of offences committed by offenders meant that the average offences per offender increased from 2.21 to 2.89 when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19.

Table 1 Offenders and offences in Queensland

	2008–09	2018–19	Change
Offenders			%
Number of offenders	114,524	112,055	–2.2 ▼
ERP (10 years and older) ^(a)	3,701,121	4,398,462	18.8 ▲
Offender rate (per 100,000 persons)	3,094.3	2,547.6	–17.7 ▼
Offences			%
Total number of offences	252,804	324,220	28.2 ▲
Offence rate (per 100,000 persons)	6,830.5	7,371.2	7.9 ▲
Offending frequency			number
Average offences per offender (SD)	2.21 (4.44)	2.89 (4.36)	0.69 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

4.2. Age–crime curves for total offenders and offences

Age–crime curves were used to explore age-based changes in the distribution of offenders and offences. The reductions in the total number and rate of offenders in Queensland shown in section 4.1 were driven by decreases in younger offenders, as slight increases in older offenders were observed to have occurred in the overall declining context. Increases in the number of offences being committed was apparent for younger and older offenders who both contributed to the overall increase in offence counts.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show substantial changes in the age-specific rates of offenders and offences when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, respectively. Figure 1 shows the 2008–09 age–crime curve for offenders resembles the classic age–crime curve demonstrated by other research, with the rate of offenders increasing substantially in the early teenage years, peaking at age 19 years. This is then followed by a steady decline, which continues into middle age.

In comparison, the 2018–19 age–crime curve for offenders shows that while younger offenders remained more prevalent than older offenders, there were substantial decreases in younger offender rates (most apparent for those aged in their mid-teens to around 30 years) and slight increases in older offender rates (most apparent for those in their 30s and 40s). For example, the peak offender rate per 100,000 persons at age 19 years decreased by 34.2% (from 9,576 in 2008–09 to 6,300 in 2018–19). Conversely, one of the largest increases was in the offender rate for those aged 39 years, which increased by 24.9% (from 2,937 per 100,000 persons in 2008–09 to 3,669 in 2018–19). This suggests that the overall decline in offenders shown in Table 1 above was driven largely by a reduction in younger offenders.

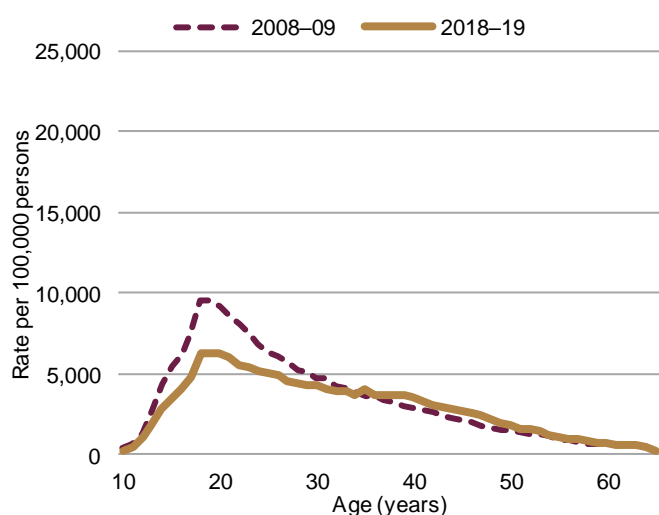
The age–crime curve for offences is shown in Figure 2. Similar to the age–crime curve for offenders, the age–crime curve for offences shows a higher rate of offences among younger offenders than older offenders, with the offence rate peaking for those aged 19 years and then steadily declining with age. However, changes in the age–crime curve for offences were different from those observed for the age–crime curve for offenders.

While the offender rate decreased for those aged 10 to around 30 years when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, decreases in offence rates were only observed for those aged in their mid-teens to mid-20s. Decreases in younger offender rates were also more substantial than decreases in their offence rates. For example, the offender rate for 19-year-olds decreased by 34.2% when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, while the offence rate decreased by 24.4% over the same period (from 22,290 to 16,842 offences per 100,000 persons). The results suggest that younger offenders in 2018–19 committed more offences on average than younger offenders in 2008–09.

Growth in the offence rate for older offenders tended to be larger than increases in the older offender rate. For example, the offender rate for 39-year-olds increased by 24.9% when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, while their offence rate increased 85.8% (from 5,924 to 11,007 per 100,000 persons). In other words, not only did the prevalence of older offenders increase between the two observation periods, the number of offences committed by these offenders increased.

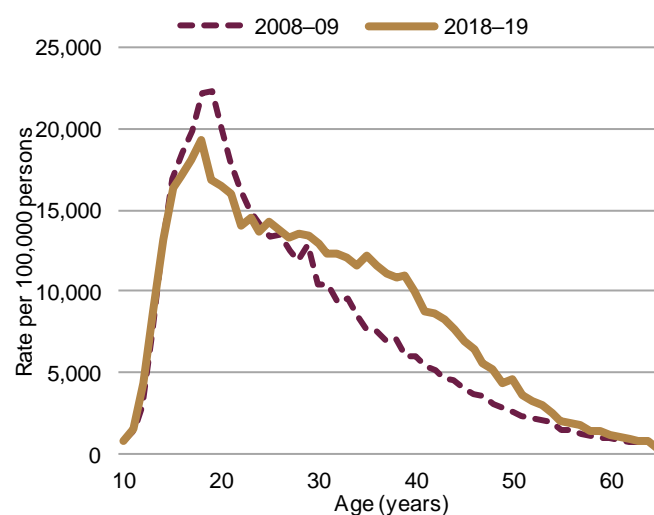
The following section explores whether changes observed in the shape of age–crime curves for offenders and offences discussed here differ depending on the type of offence being committed.

Figure 1 Age-specific rates of offenders



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Figure 2 Age-specific rates of offences



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

4.3. Age–crime curves by offence type

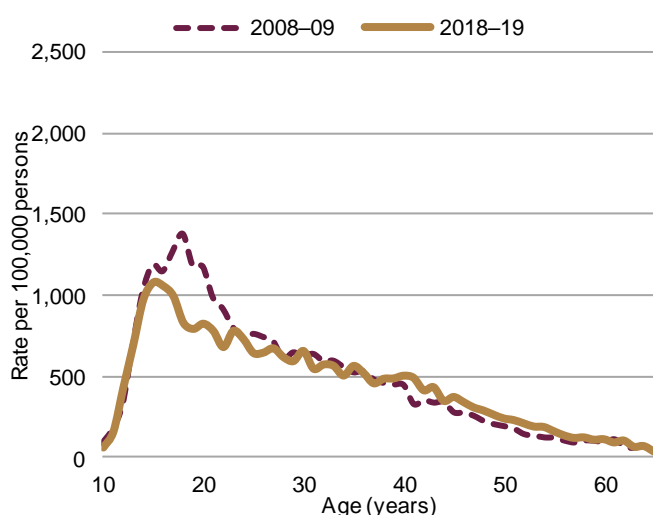
Age–crime curves for 2008–09 and 2018–19 based on offender and offence rates for personal, property and ‘other’ offence groupings were developed to determine if changes in the age-distribution of crime observed at the aggregate level coincided with changes in the types of offences being committed. Overall, the results show a reduction in younger offenders committing personal, property, and ‘other’ offences, while the prevalence of older offenders increased across each of the three offence groupings. The comparative changes in offence rate age–crime curves typically indicate increases in the average number of offences per offender across ages and offence groupings. However, the magnitude of offender and offence rate changes and the ages at which they occurred varied. Readers are reminded that personal offences tend to be less common than property and ‘other’ offences.

4.3.1. Age–crime curves for personal offenders and offences

Analyses (data not shown) found that the overall personal offender rate decreased by 9.7% (from 435 to 393 offenders per 100,000 persons) and the personal offence rate decreased by 5.7% (from 614 to 579 offences per 100,000 persons) when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. The slightly larger decrease in the prevalence of people committing personal offences when compared with the rate of personal offences suggests some increases in the average number of offences per offender. These changes are explored further in Figure 3 and Figure 4 which show the 2008–09 and 2018–19 age–crime curves for personal offender rates and personal offence rates.

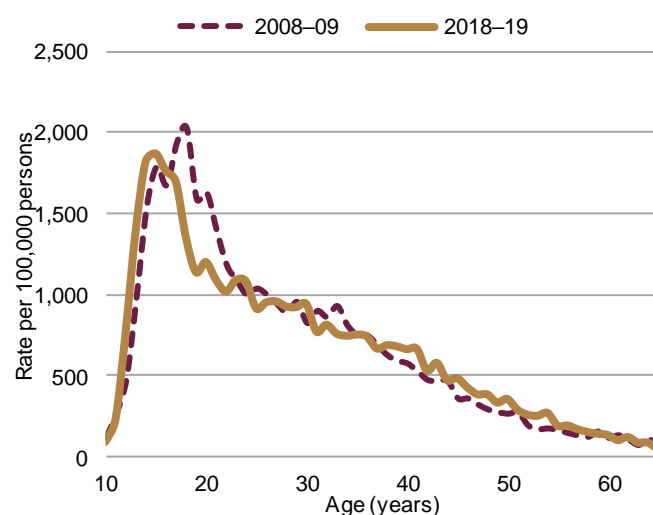
Decreases in both personal offender and personal offence rates were apparent among those in their mid-teens to early-20s when comparing 2008–09 and 2018–19. However, offender and offence rates among some older ages increased. The decline in younger offenders is illustrated by decreases in the offender and offence rate for 18-year-olds by 39.8% (from 1,377 to 829 offenders per 100,000 persons) and 33.3% (from 2,027 to 1,353 offences per 100,000 persons) respectively. This coincided with a decrease in the peak offending age from 18 years in 2008–09 to 15 years in 2018–19. These changes compare with some increases in personal offender and offence rates for older ages from around 40 years and over. For example, one of the largest percentage increases in offender and offence rates occurred among 41-year-olds, increasing by 50.0% (from 328 to 491 offenders per 100,000 persons) and 26.5% (from 526 to 665 offences per 100,000 persons) respectively. These results indicate that the overall decrease in the personal offender and personal offence rates were largely attributable to decreases among those aged in their mid-teens to early-20s, which masked some slight increases among older ages, when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19.

Figure 3 Age-specific rates of personal offenders



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Figure 4 Age-specific rates of personal offences



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

4.3.2. Age-crime curves for property offenders and offences

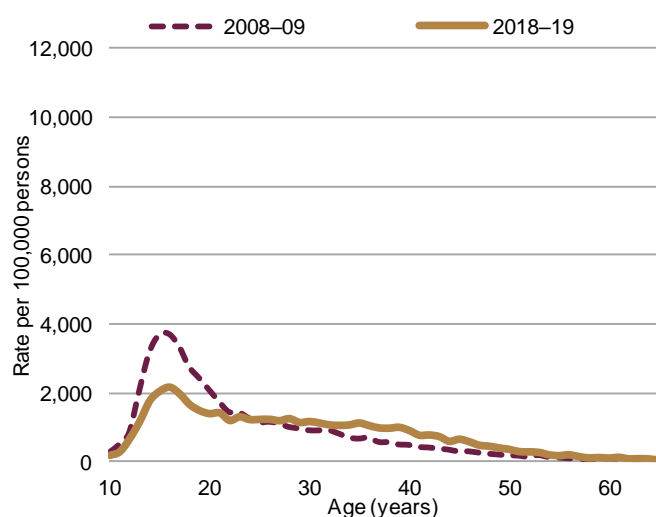
The overall property offender rate decreased by 12.0% (from 799 to 703 per 100,000 persons) while the property offence rate increased by 14.6% (from 2,059 to 2,360 per 100,000 persons), when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19 (data not shown). These changes indicate an overall decrease in the prevalence of property offenders coinciding with an increase in the average number of offences per offender. Figure 5 and Figure 6 detail this change further by showing age-crime curves for property offenders and property offences for 2008–09 and 2018–19.

While there was an apparent decrease in the prevalence of property offenders among those aged 10 to 20 years, there were some increases in offender rates for those in their 30s and 40s when comparing the two observation periods (Figure 5). For example, while the peak offender age in both observation periods was 16 years, the offender rate for this age decreased by 41.6% (from 3,717 to 2,171 per 100,000 persons). In contrast, one of the largest increases in offender rates was for those aged 39 years, which increased by 93.4% (from 517 to 999 per 100,000 persons). The age-crime curves show that the overall reduction in the property offender rate was driven by a reduction in younger offenders, and this reduction once again masked some of the increases occurring for older offenders.

The age-crime curves for property offences in Figure 6 show that while offender rates decreased among those aged 10 to 20 years, there were only some slight decreases in offence rates among offenders of this age group when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. For example, while the offender rate for 16-year-olds decreased by 41.6% when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, the offence rate only decreased by 8.4% (from 11,105 to 10,170 offences per 100,000 persons). This indicates that while there were fewer younger property offenders in 2018–19, they tended to commit more offences on average compared with 2008–09.

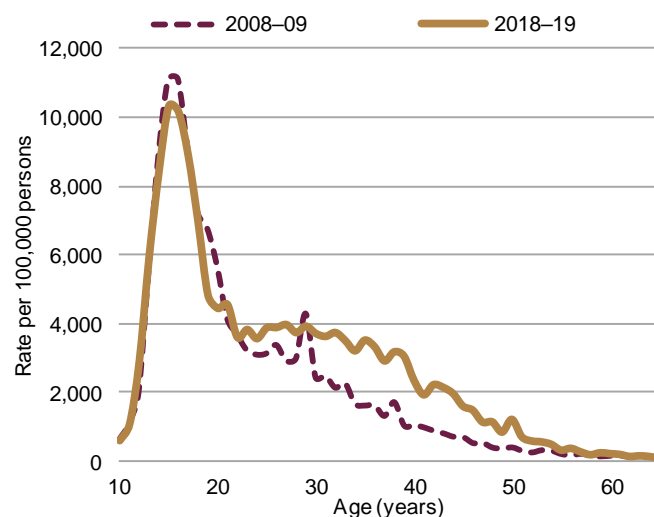
Also illustrated in Figure 6 is an increase in offence rates among those aged 30 to 50 years, which is of a greater magnitude when compared with the increase in offender rates for these ages. For example, the offender rate for 39-year-olds increased by 93.4% when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, while the offence rate almost tripled (+197.5%, from 1,019 to 3,032 offences per 100,000 persons). This suggests an increase in both the prevalence of older property offenders and the frequency at which they offended.

Figure 5 Age-specific rates of property offenders



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Figure 6 Age-specific rates of property offences



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

4.3.3. Age-crime curves for 'other' offenders and offences

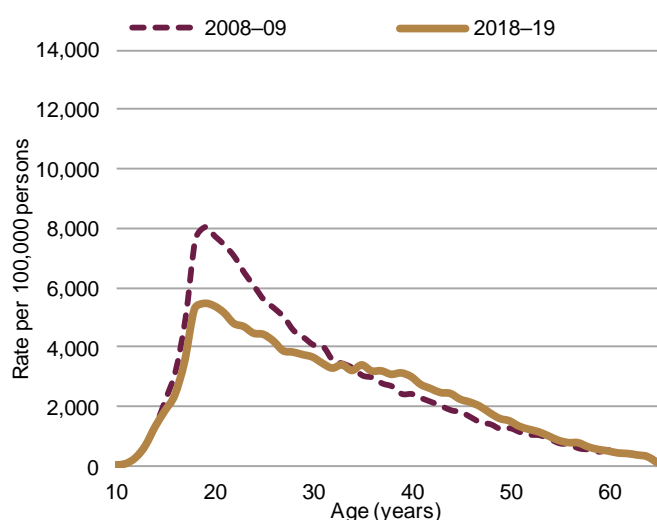
Similar to the overall changes seen for property offences, the overall offender rate of 'other' offences decreased 13.9% (from 2,441 to 2,101 offenders per 100,000 persons), while the offence rate increased 6.7% (from 4,155 to 4,432 offences per 100,000 persons) (data not shown). Again, this suggests that while there was a decrease in the overall prevalence of people committing 'other' offences, offenders committed more such offences on average in 2018–19 when compared with 2008–09. Figure 7 and Figure 8 break this down further by showing age-crime curves for 'other' offenders and 'other' offences for both observation periods.

Most apparent in Figure 7 is a decrease in offender rates among those aged in their mid-teens until around 30 years, with some increases for those aged in their mid-30s to around 50 years, when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. For example, the highest offender rate in both observation periods was among 19-year-olds which also had the largest percentage decrease of 31.7% (from 8,056 to 5,501 per 100,000 persons). This is contrasted by the largest percentage increase occurring among those aged 47 years, increasing 39.9% (from 1,457 to 2,038 per 100,000 persons). These results suggest that decreases in overall offender rates for 'other' offences were contributed to largely by those in their mid-to-late teens and 20s, which masked some increases for older ages.

Figure 8 illustrates that while offender rates notably decreased among those in their mid-teens to 20s, decreases in offence rates were less substantial and more confined to the later teens to mid-20s, when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. An example of this is the 22.0% decrease (from 13,948 to 10,886 per 100,000 persons) in the offence rate among 19-year-olds, which is smaller than the 31.7% decrease in the offender rate for this age. This indicates that while fewer younger people are committing 'other' offences, they tend to commit more offences on average in 2018–19 when compared with offenders in 2008–09.

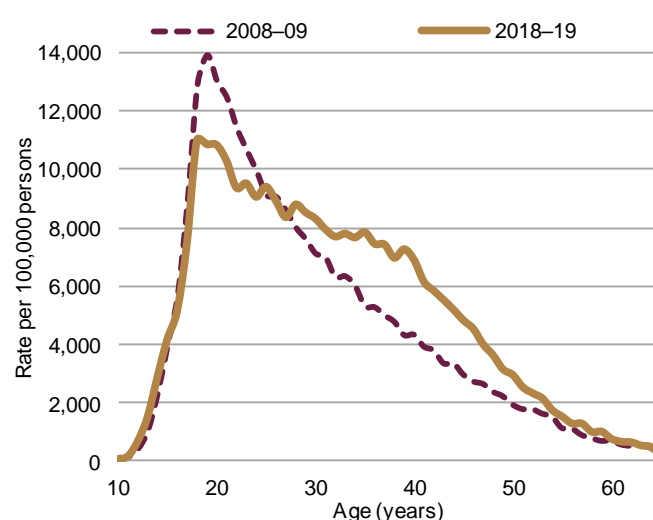
Also apparent in Figure 8 is the more substantial increase in offence rates for older ages (particularly among those in their 30s and 40s) when compared with increases in offender rates. For example, the 39.9% increase in the offender rate among 47-year-olds coincided with a 52.9% increase in the offence rate (from 2,632 to 4,023 per 100,000 persons), when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19.

Figure 7 Age-specific rates of 'other' offenders



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Figure 8 Age-specific rates of 'other' offences



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

The age-crime curves presented in this section demonstrate that changes in the prevalence and frequency of offending at the population level differed by offence type and age and highlighted key differences between younger and older offenders. To understand these changes in more detail, the next section explores variation in the types and frequency of offending of two age groups: those aged 14–29 years and 30–49 years. These age groups are presented as they account for the most change observed in the age-distribution of crime (see Appendix B for further information). Findings regarding changes in the types and frequency of offending for those aged 10–13 years and 50 years and over are available at Appendix C.

4.4. Changes in the types and frequency of offending by age group

This section shows there was variance in the types and frequency of offending committed by younger people (aged 14–29 years) compared with older people (aged 30–49 years). Understanding this variance provides insight into the offending behaviour underpinning the overall decline in younger offenders and increase in older offenders observed when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19.

This section commences by discussing changes in the rate of offenders committing personal, property and 'other' offences (prevalence of offenders) and the average number of offences per offender (frequency of offending) for those aged 14–29 years. Following this, changes within each offence group are considered by examining the offence categories within each offence group. Findings for those aged 30–49 years are then discussed and compared.

4.4.1. Prevalence and frequency of offending among those aged 14–29 years

Table 2 shows that 'other' offences were the most prevalent offence type for those aged 14–29 for both reference years, followed by property and personal offences. There were decreases in the offender rate across all offence groups and increases in the average number of offences per offender, most notably for property offences.

The offender rate for people aged 14–29 years decreased by 28.8% (from 6,951 to 4,950 per 100,000 persons) when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, with the largest decrease in offender rates observed for property offences (–27.8%, from 2,028 to 1,464 per 100,000 persons), followed by 'other' offences (–25.3%, from 5,463 to 4,083 per 100,000 persons). These changes coincided with an increase in the frequency of offences for property and 'other' offences, with the largest increase occurring for property offences which increased from 2.76 to 3.70 average offences per offender. The offender rate for personal offences decreased by 17.6% (from 951 to 783 per 100,000 persons), with frequency of these offences remaining relatively stable.

The offence categories underpinning changes within personal, property and 'other' offence groupings for offenders aged 14–29 is discussed below.

Table 2 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 14–29 years by offence grouping

14–29 years			
	2008–09	2018–19	Change
Offender rate	Rate per 100,000 persons		%
Personal offences	950.7	783.2	–17.6 ▼
Property offences	2,027.5	1,463.7	–27.8 ▼
'Other' offences	5,463.2	4,082.9	–25.3 ▼
Total^(a)	6,950.9	4,950.3	–28.8 ▼
Average offences per offender (SD)	—number—		number
Personal offences	1.42 (0.96)	1.55 (1.15)	0.13 ▲
Property offences	2.76 (8.90)	3.70 (6.00)	0.94 ▲
'Other' offences	1.70 (1.34)	2.08 (1.90)	0.39 ▲
Total^(a)	2.33 (5.29)	3.06 (4.70)	0.72 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

4.4.1.2. Prevalence and frequency of personal offending among those aged 14–29 years

When examining personal offences in more detail, the decrease in the personal offender rate among those aged 14–29 years observed when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19 appeared to be driven by decreases in the more prevalent personal offence categories of *acts intended to cause injury* (–20.6% from 662 to 525 per 100,000 persons)¹³, and *sexual assault and related offences* (–16.9% from 100 to 83 per 100,000 persons)¹⁴ (Table 3). However, these decreases coincided with an increase in the offender rate for *robbery, extortion and related offences* (+32.8% from 88 to 117 per 100,000 persons). There were no substantial changes in the average number of offences per offender for any of the personal offence categories.

Table 3 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 14–29 years by personal offence categories

14–29 years	Personal offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Homicide and related offences	10.0	5.3	–46.8 ▼	1.14 (0.48)	1.03 (0.18)	–0.11 ▼
Acts intended to cause injury	661.8	525.2	–20.6 ▼	1.31 (0.72)	1.37 (0.90)	0.06 ▲
Sexual assault and related offences	100.2	83.3	–16.9 ▼	1.34 (0.93)	1.44 (0.93)	0.10 ▲
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	159.8	151.3	–5.3 ▼	1.17 (0.58)	1.19 (0.56)	0.02 ▲
Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person	8.8	12.8	45.5 ▲	1.42 (0.85)	1.26 (0.72)	–0.16 ▼
Robbery, extortion and related offences	88.2	117.1	32.8 ▲	1.54 (1.15)	1.50 (1.00)	–0.04 ▼
Total^(a)	950.7	783.2	–17.6 ▼	1.42 (0.96)	1.55 (1.15)	0.13 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for personal offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

4.4.1.3. Prevalence and frequency of property offending among those aged 14–29 years

Table 4 shows that the decrease in the property offender rate among those aged 14–29 years was driven by substantial decreases in *theft and related offences* (–21.1%, from 1,351 to 1,066 per 100,000 persons)¹⁵, *property damage and environmental pollution* (–28.4%, from 622 to 445 per 100,000 persons)¹⁶, and *unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter* (–22.2%, from 456 to 355 per 100,000 persons).¹⁷ However, increases in average offences per property offender were driven by the most prevalent property offence category *theft and related offences*, which increased from an average of 2.02 to 2.99 offences.

¹³ The most common offences which comprised *acts intended to cause injury* included *assault occasioning actual bodily harm*, *common assault* and *assault police* which all contributed to the decrease in the offender rate for this offence category, with the offender rate for these offences decreasing by 12.9% (from 325 to 283 per 100,000 persons), 7.5% (from 228 to 211 per 100,000 persons) and 61.2% (from 110 to 43 per 100,000 persons) respectively.

¹⁴ The most prevalent offences which contributed to this decrease in *sexual assault and related offences* were *indecent treatment of a child* (–35.3%, from 29 to 19 per 100,000 persons) and *caral knowledge of children* (–58.1%, from 20 to 8 per 100,000 persons).

¹⁵ The most prevalent offence which contributed to this decrease in *theft and related offences* is *theft from retail premises*, which decreased by 28.4% (from 612 to 438 per 100,000 persons). However, this decrease coincides with some notable increases in *theft of a motor vehicle* (+40.4%, from 204 to 286 per 100,000 persons) and *stealing from other buildings* (+46.0%, from 163 to 238 per 100,000 persons) offences.

¹⁶ More prevalent offences which contributed to this decrease in *property damage and environmental pollution* included *property damage, not elsewhere classified (nec) (remainder)* (–22.2%, from 517 to 402 per 100,000 persons) and *graffiti* (–55.0%, from 106 to 48 per 100,000 persons).

¹⁷ More prevalent offences which contributed to this decrease in *unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter* included *break and enter other building* (–31.6%, from 215 to 147 per 100,000 persons) and *break and enter shop* (–55.2%, from 84 to 37 per 100,000 persons).

Table 4 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 14–29 years by property offence categories

14–29 years	Property offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	456.1	354.9	–22.2 ▼	2.62 (5.37)	2.97 (3.85)	0.35 ▲
Theft and related offences	1,350.7	1,066.2	–21.1 ▼	2.02 (3.23)	2.99 (4.17)	0.97 ▲
Fraud, deception and related offences	175.7	172.4	–1.9 ▼	2.82 (23.80)	2.87 (4.36)	0.05 ▲
Property damage and environmental pollution	622.0	445.3	–28.4 ▼	1.89 (5.10)	1.51 (1.39)	–0.38 ▼
Total^(a)	2,027.5	1,463.7	–27.8 ▼	2.76 (8.90)	3.70 (6.00)	0.94 ▲

(SD) Standard Deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for property offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population***4.4.1.4. Prevalence and frequency of 'other' offending among those aged 14–29 years**

The observed decrease in the 'other' offender rate among those aged 14–29 years was driven by substantial decreases in *public order offences* (–43.6%, from 2,209 to 1,246 per 100,000 persons), *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* (–33.4%, from 1,875 to 1,248 per 100,000 persons) and *offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations* (–17.9%, from 1,344 to 1,103 per 100,000 persons) (Table 5). These decreases contrast with an increase in the offender rate for *illicit drug offences* (+22.1%, from 1,370 to 1,673 per 100,000 persons)¹⁸, which was the most prevalent offence category for this age group in 2018–19 (*public order offences* were the most prevalent in 2008–09). Further, *illicit drug offences* had the largest increase in average offences per offender, from 1.74 to 2.00.

Further analysis (data not shown) uncovered that the reduction in *public order offences* was driven by *disorderly conduct, nec* which decreased by 45.4% from 1,651 to 901 per 100,000 persons, with other decreases also apparent for *liquor and tobacco offences (remainder)* (–56.3%, from 379 to 166 per 100,000 persons) and *trespass* (–21.4%, from 272 to 214 per 100,000 persons). There was also some observed variation when examining offences within the *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* and *offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations* offence categories in more detail. Underpinning changes in *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* was a large decrease in *drink driving – exceed general alcohol limit* (–65.9%, from 1,144 to 390 per 100,000 persons) and a substantial increase in *drug driving* (+3,902.7%, from 11 to 430 per 100,000 persons).¹⁹ Further, the decrease in *offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations* was driven mostly by a decrease in *resist arrest, incite, hinder obstruct police* (–30.6%, from 1,096 to 761 per 100,000 persons), although this masked a large increase in *breach of violence order offences* (+86.6%, from 204 to 381 per 100,000 persons).

¹⁸ Increases in the offender rate for *illicit drug offences* was driven mostly by an increase in the offender rates for *possess and/or use illicit drugs not further defined* (+23.9%, from 1,054 to 1,306 per 100,000 persons) and *possession of drug utensils* (+27.9%, from 819 to 1,048 per 100,000 persons), which are often co-occurring offences and the most prevalent offence types within this category.

¹⁹ It is important to note that this very large percentage increase is due to the very small offender rate in 2008–09, increasing from 11 to 430 offenders per 100,000 persons, becoming the most prevalent traffic offence in 2018–19 for this age group.

Table 5 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 14–29 years by 'other' offence categories

14–29 years	'Other' offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
Offence category	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Illicit drug offences	1,369.9	1,672.8	22.1 ▲	1.74 (1.06)	2.00 (1.45)	0.26 ▲
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	160.3	259.2	61.7 ▲	1.09 (0.34)	1.18 (0.51)	0.09 ▲
Public order offences	2,209.1	1,246.4	–43.6 ▼	1.27 (0.87)	1.32 (0.95)	0.05 ▲
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	1,874.9	1,247.9	–33.4 ▼	1.16 (0.49)	1.23 (0.61)	0.07 ▲
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	1,343.6	1,103.1	–17.9 ▼	1.29 (0.71)	1.51 (1.08)	0.22 ▲
Miscellaneous offences	7.1	6.9	–3.3 ▼	1.00 (0.00)	1.04 (0.20)	0.04 ▲
Total^(a)	5,463.2	4,082.9	–25.3 ▼	1.70 (1.34)	2.08 (1.90)	0.39 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for other offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

The results presented in section 4.4.1 indicate that the decrease in the prevalence of offenders among those aged 14–29 years is largely attributable to decreases in the rate of property offenders, however an increase in the average number of property offences committed by property offenders was observed. In contrast to the decrease in property offenders aged 14–29 years, there were substantial increases in offender rates for some offence categories for this age group, most notably *illicit drug offences*. Section 4.4.1 findings are compared with changes in the types and frequency of offending among those aged 30–49 years in the following section.

4.4.2. Prevalence and frequency of offending among those aged 30–49 years

While there were decreases in the offender rate across all offence groups for those aged 14–29 years, increases were observed for those aged 30–49 years. Increases were also apparent in the frequency of offences for offenders aged 30–49 years for property and 'other' offences.

Table 6 shows that the offender rate for people aged 30–49 years increased by 10.3% when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, with the largest increase apparent for property offences, which increased by 56.2% (from 544 to 849 offenders per 100,000 persons). 'Other' offences increased by 12.9% (from 2,515 to 2,839 per 100,000 persons) and personal offences increased by 8.4% (from 423 to 458 per 100,000 persons). Increases in the average number of offences per offender were observed for both property and 'other' offence groupings, with the largest increase for property offences which grew from 2.27 to 2.97.

The offence categories underpinning changes within personal, property and 'other' offence groupings for offenders aged 30–49 are discussed below.

Table 6 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 30–49 years by offence grouping

30–49 years			
	2008–09	2018–19	Change
Offender rate	Rate per 100,000 persons		%
Personal offences	422.5	457.9	8.4 ▲
Property offences	543.6	849.1	56.2 ▲
'Other' offences	2,514.7	2,838.7	12.9 ▲
Total^(a)	2,998.8	3,306.6	10.3 ▲
Average offences per offender (SD)	—number—		number
Personal offences	1.40 (1.14)	1.37 (0.82)	–0.03 ▼
Property offences	2.27 (4.73)	2.97 (4.85)	0.70 ▲
'Other' offences	1.76 (1.73)	2.23 (2.12)	0.47 ▲
Total^(a)	2.09 (2.90)	2.87 (3.88)	0.78 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

4.4.2.1. Prevalence and frequency of personal offending among those aged 30–49 years

When comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19, the increase in the personal offender rate for those aged 30–49 years was driven by increases in the offender rate for several personal offence categories (Table 7). This included an increase in the offender rate for the most prevalent personal offence category of *acts intended to cause injury* which increased by 7.4% (from 307 to 330 per 100,000 persons)²⁰, with other notable increases apparent for less prevalent offence categories such as *dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons* (+38.4%, from 65 to 90 per 100,000 persons)²¹ and *robbery, extortion and related offences* (+63.4% from 14 to 22 per 100,000 persons). The average offences per offender for personal offence categories remained stable or decreased slightly.

²⁰ The increase in the offender rate for *acts intended to cause injury* was driven by increases in *assault occasioning actual bodily harm* (+23.4% from 133 to 164 per 100,000 persons) and *common assault* (+12.3% from 122 to 137 per 100,000 persons).

²¹ The increase in the offender rate for *dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons* was contributed to by increases in *dangerous driving* (+42.3% from 26 to 37 per 100,000 persons), *other dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons, nec (remainder)* (+121.3% from 16 to 34 per 100,000 persons) and *going armed to cause fear* (+33.9% from 9 to 12 per 100,000 persons).

Table 7 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 30–49 years by personal offence categories

30–49 years	Personal offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Homicide and related offences	5.3	3.9	–25.8 ▼	1.14 (0.47)	1.15 (0.41)	0.01 ▲
Acts intended to cause injury	307.4	330.1	7.4 ▲	1.27 (0.66)	1.23 (0.59)	–0.04 ▼
Sexual assault and related offences	56.4	54.5	–3.4 ▼	1.41 (1.94)	1.33 (0.88)	–0.07 ▼
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	64.8	89.7	38.4 ▲	1.32 (0.97)	1.17 (0.53)	–0.16 ▼
Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person	5.1	8.2	60.3 ▲	1.24 (0.62)	1.14 (0.51)	–0.11 ▼
Robbery, extortion and related offences	13.6	22.1	63.4 ▲	1.53 (1.81)	1.31 (0.78)	–0.22 ▼
Total^(a)	422.5	457.9	8.4 ▲	1.40 (1.14)	1.37 (0.82)	–0.03 ▼

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for personal offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population***4.4.2.2. Prevalence and frequency of property offending among those aged 30–49 years**

Offender rates increased across all property offence categories for those aged 30–49 years, with the largest increase occurring for the most prevalent property offence category of *theft and related offences* (+86.0%, from 344 to 640 per 100,000 persons) (Table 8).²² These increases coincided with increases in the average number of offences per offender, with the largest increase occurring for *theft and related offences* from 1.78 to 2.44. However, there was a decrease in average number of offences per offender for *unlawful entry with intent/burglary* from 2.94 to 2.42.

Table 8 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 30–49 years by property offence categories

30–49 years	Property offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	82.7	143.0	72.8 ▲	2.94 (7.62)	2.42 (3.81)	–0.52 ▼
Theft and related offences	343.9	639.6	86.0 ▲	1.78 (2.65)	2.44 (3.29)	0.65 ▲
Fraud, deception and related offences	90.4	136.0	50.5 ▲	2.44 (4.21)	2.84 (4.59)	0.40 ▲
Property damage and environmental pollution	134.1	182.0	35.8 ▲	1.18 (0.58)	1.27 (0.95)	0.09 ▲
Total^(a)	543.6	849.1	56.2 ▲	2.27 (4.73)	2.97 (4.85)	0.70 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for property offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

²² The increase in the offender rate for *theft and related offences* was attributable to several types of theft offences, with notable increases in offender rates for *theft from a retail premises* (+81.7%, from 138 to 250 per 100,000 persons), *stealing from other buildings* (+219.1%, from 55 to 177 per 100,000 persons) and *theft of a motor vehicle* (+250.5%, from 28 to 97 per 100,000 persons).

4.4.2.3. Prevalence and frequency of 'other' offending among those aged 30–49 years

Table 9 shows that the increase in the offender rate for 'other' offences among those aged 30–49 years was driven by increases in the offender rate for several prevalent offence categories, including *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* (+8.0% from 1,101 to 1,190 per 100,000 persons), *illicit drug offences* (+62.9% from 646 to 1,052 per 100,000 persons)²³, and *offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations* (+49.1% from 614 to 916 per 100,000 persons). *Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* remained the most prevalent offence category for this age group in both reference years. These increases were contrasted with a 6.0% decrease in the offender rate for *public order offences* (from 618 to 581 per 100,000 persons).²⁴ Changes in average offences per offender were relatively stable, although there was an increase for *illicit drug offences* from 1.90 to 2.23.

Similar to the findings for those aged 14–29 years, some notable changes were observed when looking at *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* and *offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations* in more detail (data not shown). This included a decrease in the offender rate for *drink driving – exceed general alcohol limit* (–47.7%, from 678 to 355 per 100,000 persons) which was offset by a substantial increase in *drug driving* (+5,064.6%, from 9 to 479 per 100,000 persons).²⁵ Further, the increase in *offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations* was driven by increases in both *resist arrest, incite, hinder obstruct police* (+30.3%, from 383 to 499 offenders per 100,000 persons) and *breach of violence order offences* (+103.4%, from 224 to 456 per 100,000 persons).

Table 9 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 30–49 years by 'other' offence categories

30 to 49 years	'Other' offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
Offence category	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Illicit drug offences	645.7	1,051.8	62.9 ▲	1.90 (1.17)	2.23 (1.65)	0.33 ▲
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	78.0	201.2	158.0 ▲	1.13 (0.42)	1.19 (0.52)	0.05 ▲
Public order offences	617.6	580.6	–6.0 ▼	1.55 (2.15)	1.43 (1.30)	–0.12 ▼
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	1,101.4	1,190.0	8.0 ▲	1.16 (0.49)	1.24 (0.63)	0.08 ▲
offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	614.2	915.5	49.1 ▲	1.38 (0.92)	1.58 (1.20)	0.20 ▲
Miscellaneous offences	30.6	5.4	–82.2 ▼	1.08 (0.67)	1.03 (0.16)	–0.06 ▼
Total^(a)	2,514.7	2,838.7	12.9 ▲	1.76 (1.73)	2.23 (2.12)	0.47 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for other offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

The findings presented so far have focussed on possible variance between those aged 14–29 years and 30–49 years in the prevalence and frequency of offending by different offence groups and categories when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. Changes in the types of frequency of offences for other age groups are available in Appendix C, and the section below examines possible differentiation in terms of offending history between offenders aged 14–29 years and 30–49 years.

²³ The increase in the offender rate for *illicit drug offences* was driven by increases in *possess and/or use illicit drugs not further defined* (+60.1%, from 500 to 801 per 100,000 persons) and *possession of drug utensils* (+68.1%, from 400 to 671 per 100,000 persons).

²⁴ The decrease in the offender rate for *public order offences* was contributed to by decreases in offender rates for *disorderly conduct, nec* (–3.0%, from 427 to 414 per 100,000 persons) and *liquor and tobacco offences (remainder)* (–54.2%, from 180 to 82 per 100,000 persons).

²⁵ The large percentage increase reflects the introduction of random drug driving tests performed by police via the passing of the *Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006* (Qld). The offence became the most prevalent traffic offence in 2018–19 for this age group.

4.5. Prior offending by age group

The prior offending of offenders was explored to determine if changes in the age distribution of crime related to changes in patterns of recidivism.²⁶ While further research that accounts for lifetime offending history is required, the findings of this project suggest that both younger and older offenders had more extensive criminal histories in 2018–19 when comparing with 2012–13. Available data did not indicate that observed increases in the older offender rate could be explained by 'new' people having contact with the criminal justice system.

Table 10 shows changes in the proportion of offenders aged 14–29 years and 30–49 years with different prior offending histories when comparing 2012–13 with 2018–19.²⁷ The proportion of offenders with no prior offending in the previous four years decreased for both age groups, although relatively more for older offenders. It decreased from 40.8% to 31.6% (–9.3 percentage points) for offenders aged 30–49 years and from 38.7% to 35.4% (–3.3 percentage points) for offenders aged 14–29 years. Conversely, the proportion of offenders with 11 or more offences increased for both groups, growing by 8.9 percentage points (from 10.1% to 19.0%) for older offenders and 5.4 percentage points (from 12.4% to 17.8%) for younger offenders.

Reductions in the proportion of offenders with no prior offending history suggest that offending behaviour has become more concentrated among both younger and older offenders, and increases in the proportion of older offenders committing 11 or more prior offences in the context of a growing prevalence of older offenders (see Table 6) possibly suggest more persistent or entrenched offending among this cohort. Increases in the proportion of younger offenders committing 11 or more prior offences in the context of a declining prevalence of younger offenders (see Table 2) could indicate growing complexity among young people in contact with the criminal justice system.

Table 10 Changes in prior offending by age group

Age group	Number of prior offences in previous four years	Proportion of offenders		
		2012–13	2018–19	Proportion change
		—per cent (%)—		percentage point (ppt)
14–29 years	0	38.7	35.4	–3.3 ▼
	1–3	29.7	26.4	–3.3 ▼
	4–10	19.2	20.3	1.1 ▲
	11+	12.4	17.8	5.4 ▲
30–49 years	0	40.8	31.6	–9.3 ▼
	1–3	30.1	26.0	–4.1 ▼
	4–10	19.0	23.5	4.5 ▲
	11+	10.1	19.0	8.9 ▲

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data

²⁶ A four-year monitoring period was used as a measure of prior offending (see section 3.2.4 for further information regarding its measurement).

²⁷ Findings regarding the four-year offending histories for those aged 50 years and over are available at Appendix D Changes in prior offending for those aged 50 years and over.

5.0 Discussion

The research described in this report sought to understand how changes in the types and frequency of offending have contributed to changes in the age distribution of crime in Queensland when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. Police administrative data were used to construct age–crime curves to compare the age–specific offender and offence rates by the broad offence groupings of personal, property and ‘other’ offences. Apparent changes were then further examined by describing changes among those aged 14–29 years and 30–49 years in offender rates and average offences per offender by offence categories (that is, the offences that constitute personal, property and ‘other’ offences). Finally, changes in the prior offending of offenders were presented.

5.1. Key findings

Project findings align with other research showing changes in the age distribution of crime, with offender rates reducing among younger people and increasing among older people (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; Matthews and Minton 2018; Trimboli 2019). These changes were underpinned by varying changes in age-specific offending by offence type.

Reductions in younger offenders aged 14–29 years (when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19) were associated with:

- decreases in all types of offenders, most notably among property offenders (–27.8%) and ‘other’ offenders (–25.3%), followed by personal offenders (–17.6%)
- increases in the frequency of offending (average offences per offender) apparent for personal, property and ‘other’ offenders, most evident for property offences (which increased from 2.76 to 3.70), followed by ‘other’ offences (1.70 to 2.08) and personal offences (1.42 to 1.55)
- increases in the frequency of property offences were evident across most property offence categories, and most evident for *theft and related offences* (which increased from 2.02 to 2.99 on average).

Several interrelated factors are offered in the literature to explain the decrease in the prevalence of young offenders. These include:

- reduced opportunities to commit less serious ‘debut’ crimes, such as theft, resulting from improved security measures (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; Farrell et al. 2011)
- downward trends in the prevalence of illicit drug use and risky drinking behaviours among younger people (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2020; Weatherburn, Freeman and Holmes 2014)
- improved prosocial bonds with family and peers, and engagement with education and employment (Krohn et al. 2013; Sampson and Laub 2005)
- increased usage of the internet and social media which has potentially disrupted contexts in which traditional types of offending occur among younger people (such as less in-person socialising in public places), although this has also potentially facilitated some displacement of offending to online spaces (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; Matthews and Minton 2018; Payne, Brown and Broadhurst 2018).

It has been suggested that fewer younger people committing crime has resulted in a small, yet increasingly prolific and persistent group of young offenders remaining in contact with the criminal justice system (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015; McCarthy 2020; Payne, Brown and Broadhurst 2018). This is consistent with the results of this project which showed that younger offenders committing offences in 2018–19 more commonly had a prior offence history and were characterised as having committing offences more frequently.

Increases in older offenders aged 30–49 years (when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19) were associated with:

- increases in all types of offenders, most notably for property offenders (56.2%), followed by ‘other’ offenders (12.9%) and personal offenders (8.4%)
- increases in the frequency of property offences and ‘other’ offences, with the average number of property offences per offender increasing from 2.27 to 2.97, the average number of ‘other’ offences increasing from 1.76 to 2.23 and the average number of personal offences decreasing slightly from 1.40 to 1.37.
- increases in the frequency of property offences were most notable for *theft and related offences*, and increases in ‘other’ offences were driven by increases in *illicit drug offences*.



Like younger offenders, older offenders were more likely to have had a prior offence history in 2018–19. However, changes in the proportion of older offenders with no prior offence history (–9.3 percentage points) were greater than that observed for younger offenders (–3.3 percentage points).

A cohort effect may possibly be contributing to observed increases in the prevalence of offenders and frequency of offences among those aged 30–49 years. In other words, changes in the age-distribution of crime may be related to a cohort of young offenders who have persisted with offending into an older age. This could be the result of their growing up in a period characterised by more opportunities to begin a criminal career compared with younger generations (Farrell, Laycock and Tilley 2015), and the possible criminogenic effects of contact with the criminal justice system (Cunneen 2008; Motz et al. 2020). Research has suggested that persistent offending (and consequential contact with the criminal justice system) into an older age group may cause diminishing access to mechanisms that support pro-social identities and desistance from crime such as ties to family, education and employment (Paternoster and Bushway 2009; Weaver 2019). Some also argue that being officially labelled as a criminal by the criminal justice system can lead to the acceptance of a criminal identity, thereby promoting further criminal behaviour (Motz et al. 2020). However, further research is required to understand the offending desistance process and how it relates to contact with the criminal justice system, as there is mixed evidence regarding this.

The prevalence of illicit drug offenders and the frequency of illicit drug offences increased among both younger and older age groups, and other work undertaken by QGSO has shown that the rate of illicit drug offences in Queensland increased substantially between 2010–11 and 2015–16 (QGSO 2020a). However, there was a difference in the magnitude of growth, and the higher increase of illicit drug offenders and offences among older people compared with younger people may reflect multiple factors. This includes reduced opportunities for the use of drug diversion for older offenders due to their cumulative drug offence history²⁸, reduced prevalence of illicit drug use among younger people (AIHW 2020) and the chronic relapse nature of illicit drug dependency (Chandler, Fletcher and Volkow 2009). Other research has also shown illicit drug use to be associated with involvement in crime (sometimes referred to as the 'drug–crime nexus') (Freiberg et al. 2016), and there may be a relationship between the observed escalation in the prevalence of illicit drug offenders and increases in the average number of offences committed by both younger and older offenders. However, further research is required to understand the mechanisms contributing to illicit drug offence trends apparent in Queensland (which could also be explained by policy and operational change), and the possible influence of illicit drug use on Queensland's offence trends in general.

Some of the apparent offence-based changes observed when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19 may be explained by the implementation of targeted strategies and/or changes in legislation which potentially impacted different age groups in divergent ways. For example, there was a decrease in public order offenders (which is comprised of disorderly conduct and liquor and tobacco offences) among both younger (–43.6%) and older age groups (–6.0%). These decreases occurred in the context of efforts to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence in areas with a concentration of licensed premises (safe night precincts) which tend to be frequented by younger people. This includes the *Safe Night Out Strategy* (Queensland Government 2014) and the *Tackling Alcohol-Fuelled Violence Amendment Act 2016* (Qld) which resulted in several initiatives targeting anti-social behaviour in safe night precincts.²⁹

Another prevalent offence category which saw differential change in offender rates was *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences*, with the offender rate decreasing 33.4% among those aged 14–29 years and increasing 8.0% for the older age group. These changes were underpinned by decreases in the rate of drink driving offenders and increases in drug driving offenders for both age groups. These trends may reflect ongoing social change efforts targeting drink driving (Department of Transport and Main Roads 2015; QPS 2016) and the implementation of the *Safer Roads, Safer Queensland: Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015–2021*, which includes increased police capacity to detect drug drivers via roadside drug testing.

System reform aimed at reducing domestic and family violence in the community may also partly explain increases in the offender rate for breach of domestic violence order offences for both age groups (an increase of 86.6% among those aged 14–29 years and 103.4% among those aged 30–49 years). Other work undertaken by QGSO (2021e) has shown substantial increases in the number of domestic violence orders issued in Queensland following the release of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report in 2015. The likelihood of these orders being breached also increased over time (QGSO 2021f).

²⁸ Eligibility criteria for police and court drug diversion programs include not having previously been offered drug diversion opportunities or convicted of certain illicit drug offences such as supply, trafficking or production of a dangerous drug (Queensland Courts 2021; QPS 2021).

²⁹ These initiatives included limits on trading hours and the service of high alcohol content drinks, the introduction of mandatory ID scanners, and increased powers for courts and police to ban people from safe night precincts.

5.2. Research implications

The examination of changes in the age distribution of crime in relation to offence type and prior offending showed the complex nature of offending. The age and offence-based differential changes may have implications for the development of targeted criminal justice interventions.

The reduction of younger offenders shows the value of crime prevention and early intervention strategies that support young people not initiating into crime, while increases in the prevalence of older offenders and higher frequency of offending across different age groups highlights the relevance of interventions designed to address factors possibly contributing to their involvement in crime. The research findings also suggest that interventions targeting property and illicit drug offences are likely to be of particular benefit, although it is noted that other research has found that property offences reduced substantially after the implementation of socially-restrictive measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 (QGSO 2021d), and this change is not reflected in the observation periods used for this project.

5.3. Future research

The findings presented in the current research report highlighted areas that may benefit from further research in the Queensland context. These include:

- *Accounting for crime harm when measuring changes in crime trends*

The current project aimed to understand broader changes in the age distribution of crime, which in terms of magnitude, largely involved changes in property and 'other' offences which are generally understood to be associated with less harm than personal offences. Examining changing crime trends in a way that accounts for harm may provide another source of information to assist with decision-making regarding the deployment of resources.

- *Examining the possible relationship between illicit drug offending and offending in general*

Understanding if increases in the frequency of offences being committed in general is somehow connected to increases in Queensland's illicit drug trends may assist in the development of crime reduction interventions. This could involve examining the types of illicit substances associated with illicit drug offending (as research has shown that different types of illicit substances can be associated with different types of offending) and/or changes in the illicit drug use patterns of offenders. Indeed, some evidence exists to suggest changing illicit drug use patterns among offenders in Queensland.³⁰

- *Understanding factors contributing to increases in older offenders*

The results of the current research may be complemented by further investigation regarding the mechanisms involved in the initiation, persistence and desistance from offending among older offenders (Krohn, Gibson and Thornberry 2013). This may include examination of their presenting needs (for example, mental health, employment and relationship factors) and/or further exploration of the possible criminogenic effect of the criminal justice system.

- *Longitudinal data to better examine the criminal careers of offenders*

The current research used two cross-sectional snapshots of offending data and was not able to track individual criminal trajectories (except for the examination of offender's four-year prior offending history). Given this, the current research is not able to confirm the extent to which the increase in older offenders is related to a cohort of offenders who began offending at a younger age and have persisted to an older age. Research involving the use of longitudinal data is likely to provide further insight into this issue.

³⁰ Research undertaken by QGSO (2020b) found that the proportion of adults serving community-based corrections orders assessed as presenting with a high substance misuse need increased from 45.1% in 2010–11 to 63.4% in 2016–17.

5.4. Conclusion

Changes in the age distribution of crime in Queensland include a substantial decrease in the prevalence of offending among younger people and an increase among older people when comparing 2008–09 with 2018–19. The decrease in the prevalence of offending among younger people and increase among older people is related to variation in the offender rate across several types of offences, with increases in the frequency of offending and prior offending apparent for both younger and older age groups. Decreases in the offender rate among people aged 14–29 years were observed across several offence categories including *theft and related offences*, *acts intended to cause injury*, *public order offences*, *traffic and vehicle regulatory offences* and *offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations*. This coincided with increases in the offender rate among people aged 30–49 years across these offence types, except *public order offences* which also decreased, albeit by a smaller magnitude. The offender rate for *illicit drug offences* increased for both age groups, being more profound for those aged 30–49 years.

Observed changes may relate to several interrelated factors including the impact of initiatives to address certain types of offending and changes in the prevalence of risk factors associated with offending among different age groups. Results indicate that while fewer younger people are engaging in offending behaviour, the remaining cohort of offenders may be more prolific and entrenched in offending. Further, the elevated rates of offending among older people may be related to more chronic offenders persisting with offending to an older age compared with previously. However, further research is required to understand the extent to which offenders may be persisting with offending to an older age, and the factors contributing to this. Continued focus on understanding and addressing the complex needs of entrenched offenders may support pathways to desistance from crime.

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Appendices

Appendix A Offence groupings

Offence types were categorised according to the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification* (ANZSOC). For more detailed offence type analyses, the *Australian Standard Offence Classification (Queensland Extension)* (QASOC) was used.³¹ For some analyses, the 16 ANZSOC offence categories were grouped in to 'personal', 'property' and 'other' offences, as shown in Table A1.

Table A1 ANZSOC offence category groupings

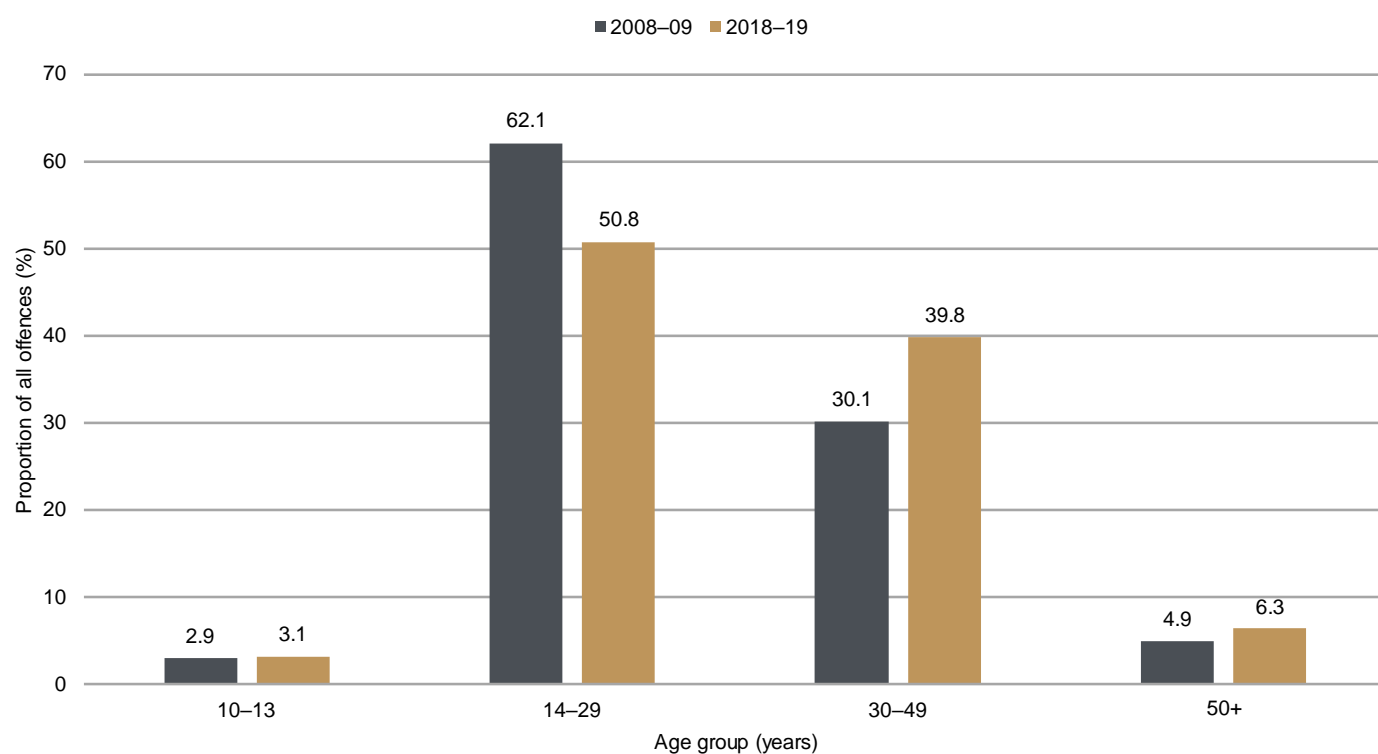
Offence grouping	ANZSOC offence category
Personal offences	Homicide and related offences
	Acts intended to cause injury
	Sexual assault and related offences
	Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons
	Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person
	Robbery, extortion and related offences
Property offences	Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter
	Theft and related offences
	Fraud, deception and related offences
	Property damage and environmental pollution
'Other' offences	Illicit drug offences
	Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences
	Public order offences
	Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences
	Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations
	Miscellaneous offences

³¹ QASOC was developed for use by Queensland agencies when more detail is needed (QGSO 2008), and is an extension of the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification, 2011* (ABS 2011).

Appendix B Proportion of offences by age group

Figure B1 displays the proportion of offences accounted for by each age group in 2008–09 and 2018–19, showing a substantial decrease in the proportion of offences committed by those aged 14–29 years and an increase for those aged 30–49 years. Those aged 10–13 years and 50 years and over accounted for a relatively small proportion of offences in both reference years.

Figure B1 Proportion of offences by age group



Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data

Appendix C Changes in the types and frequency of offending for other age groups

Table C1 to Table C8 relate to changes in the types and frequency of offending for those aged 10–13 years and 50 years and over. Broadly speaking, findings for those aged 10–13 years were similar to those aged 14–29 years. However, some differences included a larger increase in average offences per offender (particularly for property offences) and a small increase in offender rates for personal and 'other' offences for those aged 10–13 years, which decreased for those aged 14–29 years (although these offence groupings were considerably less prevalent among those aged 10–13 years compared with those aged 14–29 years). For those aged 50 years and over, changes largely resembled those aged 30–49 years although offending was substantially less prevalent, and changes were often of a smaller magnitude.

Table C1 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 10–13 years by offence group

10–13 years	2008–09	2018–19	Change
Offender rate	Rate per 100,000 persons		%
Personal offences	319.7	332.1	3.9 ▲
Property offences	928.7	573.7	–38.2 ▼
Other offences	281.1	286.3	1.8 ▲
Total^(a)	1,269.3	878.9	–30.8 ▼
Average offences per offender (SD)	—number—		number
Personal offences	1.46 (1.22)	1.83 (1.77)	0.37 ▲
Property offences	2.46 (3.25)	4.47 (7.47)	2.00 ▲
Other offences	1.51 (1.09)	2.16 (2.10)	0.65 ▲
Total^(a)	2.50 (3.50)	4.31 (8.01)	1.81 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Table C2 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 10–13 years by personal offence categories

10–13 years	Personal offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Homicide and related offences	0.4	–	–100.0 ▼	4.00 (0.00)	–	–4.00 ▼
Acts intended to cause injury	193.9	205.8	6.1 ▲	1.39 (1.23)	1.61 (1.51)	0.22 ▲
Sexual assault and related offences	102.4	90.2	–11.9 ▼	1.31 (0.78)	1.65 (1.04)	0.34 ▲
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	25.2	22.7	–9.6 ▼	1.34 (0.91)	1.18 (0.53)	–0.16 ▼
Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person	3.0	1.5	–50.9 ▼	1.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)	–
Robbery, extortion and related offences	17.8	49.2	176.6 ▲	1.29 (0.60)	2.01 (1.58)	0.71 ▲
Total^(a)	319.7	332.1	3.9 ▲	1.46 (1.22)	1.83 (1.77)	0.37 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for personal offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Table C3 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 10–13 years by property offence categories

10–13 years	Property offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	274.2	215.5	–21.4 ▼	1.99 (1.90)	3.31 (4.07)	1.32 ▲
Theft and related offences	574.3	368.7	–35.8 ▼	2.00 (2.35)	3.25 (4.64)	1.24 ▲
Fraud, deception and related offences	12.1	33.5	176.2 ▲	1.64 (1.45)	3.33 (3.70)	1.69 ▲
Property damage and environmental pollution	332.3	271.4	–18.3 ▼	1.72 (2.00)	1.99 (1.97)	0.27 ▲
Total^(a)	928.7	573.7	–38.2 ▼	2.46 (3.25)	4.47 (7.47)	2.00 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for property offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population***Table C4 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 10–13 years by 'other' offence categories**

10–13 years	Other offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Illicit drug offences	45.1	91.3	102.4 ▲	1.49 (0.70)	1.43 (0.67)	–0.06 ▼
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	24.7	36.2	46.2 ▲	1.00 (0.00)	1.14 (0.38)	0.14 ▲
Public order offences	199.5	187.5	–6.0 ▼	1.37 (0.92)	1.99 (1.80)	0.61 ▲
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	1.3	0.4	–71.4 ▼	1.00 (0.00)	2.00 (0.00)	1.00 ▲
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	49.5	50.3	1.8 ▲	1.14 (0.37)	1.37 (0.67)	0.23 ▲
Miscellaneous offences	—	4.1	n.a.	—	1.18 (0.40)	1.18 ▲
Total^(a)	281.1	286.3	1.8 ▲	1.51 (1.09)	2.16 (2.10)	0.65 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for 'other' offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Table C5 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 50 years and over by offence grouping

50 years and over			
	2008–09	2018–19	Change
Offender rate	Rate per 100,000 persons		%
Personal offences	79.9	98.0	22.6 ▲
Property offences	92.1	113.5	23.3 ▲
Other offences	484.5	515.0	6.3 ▲
Total ^(a)	609.9	649.6	6.5 ▲
Average offences per offender (SD)	—number—		number
Personal offences	1.38 (1.00)	1.27 (0.78)	–0.11 ▼
Property offences	1.45 (1.66)	1.97 (5.39)	0.52 ▲
Other offences	1.47 (1.66)	1.68 (1.46)	0.21 ▲
Total ^(a)	1.57 (1.82)	1.87 (2.90)	0.30 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population***Table C6 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 50 years and over by personal offence categories**

50 years and over	Personal offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Homicide and related offences	1.9	1.0	–49.1 ▼	1.13 (0.34)	1.13 (0.34)	–
Acts intended to cause injury	47.6	68.5	43.9 ▲	1.21 (0.71)	1.19 (0.59)	0.02 ▼
Sexual assault and related offences	22.2	18.5	–16.7 ▼	1.51 (1.12)	1.36 (0.91)	–0.15 ▼
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	11.0	13.1	19.7 ▲	1.38 (1.10)	1.08 (0.32)	–0.30 ▼
Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person	0.7	0.9	27.3 ▲	1.11 (0.33)	1.20 (0.77)	0.09 ▲
Robbery, extortion and related offences	0.6	1.4	119.5 ▲	1.38 (0.74)	1.17 (0.49)	–0.20 ▼
Total^(a)	79.9	98.0	22.6 ▲	1.38 (1.00)	1.27 (0.78)	–0.11 ▼

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for personal offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Table C7 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 50 years and over by property offence categories

50 years and over	Property offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	4.7	9.0	93.5 ▲	1.68 (2.82)	2.18 (4.16)	0.49 ▲
Theft and related offences	64.2	81.0	26.3 ▲	1.33 (1.14)	1.73 (4.57)	0.40 ▲
Fraud, deception and related offences	14.4	15.3	6.1 ▲	1.68 (1.98)	2.44 (3.62)	0.76 ▲
Property damage and environmental pollution	14.6	23.0	57.6 ▲	1.13 (0.54)	1.15 (0.52)	0.02 ▲
Total^(a)	92.1	113.5	23.3 ▲	1.45 (1.66)	1.97 (5.39)	0.52 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for property offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population***Table C8 Prevalence and frequency of offending for those aged 50 years and over by 'other' offence categories**

50 years and over	'Other' offences					
	Offender rate			Average offences per offender (SD)		
Offence category	2008–09	2018–19	Change	2008–09	2018–19	Change
	Rate per 100,000 persons		%	—number—		number
Illicit drug offences	68.2	145.4	113.2 ▲	1.86 (1.13)	2.03 (1.43)	0.17 ▲
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	20.1	27.8	38.5 ▲	1.15 (0.41)	1.12 (0.39)	–0.03 ▼
Public order offences	83.1	99.0	19.2 ▲	1.89 (3.21)	1.33 (1.04)	–0.56 ▼
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	258.3	223.7	–13.4 ▼	1.09 (0.36)	1.12 (0.44)	0.02 ▲
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	68.0	109.1	60.3 ▲	1.32 (0.90)	1.44 (1.05)	0.12 ▲
Miscellaneous offences	33.1	2.6	–92.3 ▼	1.04 (0.23)	1.16 (0.53)	0.13 ▲
Total^(a)	484.5	515.0	6.3 ▲	1.47 (1.66)	1.68 (1.46)	0.21 ▲

(SD) Standard deviation

(a) Totals in this table refer to the overall offender rate and average offences per offender for 'other' offences for this age group.

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data; ABS *National, state and territory population*

Appendix D Changes in prior offending for those aged 50 years and over

Table D1 includes those aged 50 years and over in the analysis of four-year offending histories and shows comparable changes to those in the younger age groups.

Table D1 Changes in prior offending by age group

Age group	Number of prior offences	Proportion of offenders		
		2012–13	2018–19	Proportion change
		—per cent (%)—		percentage point (ppt)
14–29 years	0	38.7	35.4	–3.3 ▼
	1–3	29.7	26.4	–3.3 ▼
	4–10	19.2	20.3	1.1 ▲
	11+	12.4	17.8	5.4 ▲
30–49 years	0	40.8	31.6	–9.3 ▼
	1–3	30.1	26.0	–4.1 ▼
	4–10	19.0	23.5	4.5 ▲
	11+	10.1	19.0	8.9 ▲
50 years and over	0	61.9	53.3	–8.6 ▼
	1–3	24.8	26.5	1.7 ▲
	4–10	9.7	14.1	4.4 ▲
	11+	3.6	6.1	2.5 ▲

Source: QGSO analysis of QPS data

